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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 6 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and, regarding the decision by the Government of Poland to present its candidature to the newly established Human Rights Council at the elections to be held on 9 May 2006, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 adopted on 15 March 2006, has the honour to enclose an aide-mémoire on the pledges and commitments of Poland in the field of human rights (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 6 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-mémoire on the Polish candidature for the Human Rights Council

(Voluntary pledges and commitments)

Protection and promotion of human rights is deeply rooted in the Polish system of law, including in the Constitution. Poland, the first country in the region to do so, established the Office of the Ombudsman for Civil Rights in 1987. During recent years, our national system for the protection of human rights has been substantially developed through, inter alia, the inclusion into the Constitution of a separate chapter on the freedoms, rights and obligations of persons and citizens as well as the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children. Poland commits itself to improve further and consolidate this internal system in order to make it even more effective and comprehensive. It also stands ready to share its experiences with other nations and, at the same time, would like to benefit from their best practices in the field of human rights.

Protection and promotion of human rights also constitutes a permanent core component of the Polish foreign policy. Poland will continue to share its common responsibility with other nations in upholding human dignity and ensuring respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any exception. Since all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural, are universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, close international cooperation in achieving their full protection in all countries is a matter of a growing necessity. Thus, the protection and promotion of human rights is a legitimate concern of the international community as a whole.

Poland is convinced that the agreement on the establishment of the Human Rights Council is one of the most substantial steps in the entire process of the United Nations reform and expresses a clear will of international community to strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery. We hope that, due to its new mandate, the Council will deal much more effectively with all instances of human rights violations all over the world. Poland considers the establishment of the Council to be a major step in recognizing that human rights should be given a central place together with development and security as one of the three pillars on which the United Nations is built.

Poland pledges to be actively involved in the work of the Council from its very inception and to contribute significantly to its credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness. It also declares that it will uphold the highest standards of human rights and fully cooperate with the Council in all its activities and tasks.

Poland is a party to all six major international conventions on human rights and the additional protocols to these conventions. It cooperates fully with all six treaty bodies monitoring the adherence of States to the convention provisions, both through the preparation of periodic implementation reports and through recognition of their competencies to hear individual complaints. In this context Poland has

undertaken to be more effective in fulfilling the recommendations formulated by the treaty bodies with respect to the Polish implementation reports.

Poland also declares that it is prepared to consider the withdrawal of its reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, presented at the time of its ratification.

Poland pledges to continue its close collaboration with the special mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights, which have been transferred to the Council. Already in 2001, Poland, as one among 40 States, issued a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. Each time a Special Rapporteur requests approval to visit our country such approval is issued along with assurances of our full cooperation.

Poland has undertaken to implement the decisions of the world conferences on human rights, including the conferences on HIV/AIDS, women, racism, and children's rights. It will continue all relevant activities already under way. In line with a decision of the World Conference against Racism, Poland has prepared a National Program of Action against racism currently under implementation. In 2004, Poland also adopted a National Program of Action to benefit children — thus fulfilling its pledge made at the 2002 United Nations children's summit.

Poland has also committed itself to further strengthen its collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other United Nations agencies operating in the field of human rights. At present, Poland, jointly with OHCHR, is preparing an international seminar on combating corruption as an element of good governance in the context of the promotion of human rights, to be held in Warsaw, in early October 2006. Poland will continue to support OHCHR and will increase its voluntary contributions to the Office.

Warsaw, 5 April 2006

Enclosure

Poland has ratified the following relevant international instruments.

Conventions on human rights ratified by Poland	Date of entry into force	Date of entry into force for Poland
A. Main international human rights conventions and protocols		
1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 16-12-1966 - date of signature,	03-01-1976	18-06-1977
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16-12-1966,	23-03-1976	18-06-1977
3. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 07-03-1966,	04-01-1969	04-01-1969
4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 18-12-1979,	03-09-1981	03-09-1981
5. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 10-12-1984,	26-06-1987	25-08-1989
6. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20-11-1989,	02-09-1990	07-07-1991
7. Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 25-05-2000,	12-02-2002	07-05-2005
8. Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, 25-05-2000,	18-01-2002	04-03-2005
9. Optional Protocol to CCPR, concerning individual petition, 16-12-1966,	23-03-1976	07-02-1992
10. Optional Protocol to CEDAW, concerning individual complaints and inquiry procedures, 06-10-1999,	22-12-2000	22-03-2004
11. Optional Protocol to Committee against Torture, concerning regular visits by national and international institutions to places of detention, 18-12-2002.	still pending	ratified 14-09-2005

B. Other United Nations human rights and related conventions		
1. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 09-12-1948,	12-01-1951	12-01-1951
2. Slavery Convention 1926 as amended 07-09-1956,	30-04-1957	10-01-1963
3. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 28-07-1951,	22-04-1954	26-12-1991
4. Protocol to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 31-01-1967,	04-10-1967	27-09-1991
5. Convention on non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity, 26-11-1968,	11-11-1970	11-11-1970
6. International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 30-11-1973,	18-07-1976	18-07-1976
7. International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, 10-12-1985,	03-04-1988	03-04-1988
8. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 17-07-1998,	01-07-2002	01-07-2002
9. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 15-11-2000,	29-09-2003	29-09-2003
10. Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, 15-11-2000,	28-01-2004	28-01-2004
11. Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, 15-11-2000	25-12-2003	25-12-2003